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MALAYSIA KEEPS OPTIONS OPEN ON EARTH SUMMIT ATTENDANCE

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SINGAPORE, Jan 28 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will only attend the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Brazil in June if it is not politically motivated, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said Malaysia was keeping its options open pending decisions that would be taken at two coming preparatory meetings of the conference, also called the Earth Summit.

+If we feel reasonably certain that it is a conference on the environment with no political motives then we will attend,+ he told a press conference at the end of the two-day Fourth Asean Summit here.

Malaysia had not said it would not be attending the conference but had only said that it might not if the conference was used to criticise the country on the environment issue.

+At one time, we were unsure whether the meeting is meant to attend to environment issues or to overthrow governments, -- more

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+There was some talk that they should concentrate on Malaysia and do all kinds of funny things,+ he said.

The Singapore Declaration signed by the Asean leaders at the end of the summit underlined the need for developed countries to help maintain an international environment supportive of economic growth and development.

The leaders said Asean looked forward to seeing the Commitments reflected in the outcome of the Rio de Janeiro conference.

On the question of Asean's new members, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said Malaysia hoped that Vietnam and Laos could join the six-member regional grouping within the next five years.

+We feel that they should become members within five years . . . we'll work hard at it,+ he said.

In the declaration, Asean leaders agreed to welcome accession by all countries in Southeast Asia to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. Vietnam and Laos have formally applied to accede to the treaty.. -- Bernama

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